

Pater Noster

by Bill Bridget

“I left the door unlocked, Bill.”
the note read,
“And I laid a change o’ clothes out for you
on the bed.
The grocery order came, lad,
and I put the coffee on;
Fix yourself a meal and don’t wait up
——I won’t be home for supper,
not tonight, son.
“There’ll be a man by in the morning,”
he went on.
“I know I can depend on you
to get it done:
Your dad is getting on, it’s plain;
and as a man gets older,
One day his strength is gone
and the burden of the days
too many to remember
too much to shoulder.
You gave me strength,
to think that you had failed *me*.
That could not be true.
If you could have been a better son
I don’t know how,
’cause I’ve never stopped being proud
of you . . .
“And though I’ve gone away, I want your promise
not to worry’ bout me, lad.
I’ll be in the barn.
Come and cut me down.
Your dad.”